

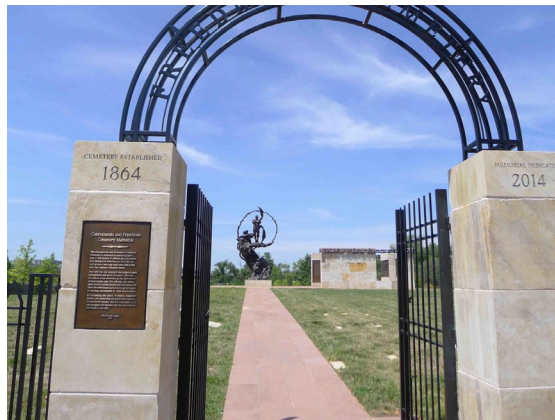
# Publicly Accessible Open Space Task 1

Park and Recreation Commission

April 15, 2021

# Project Purpose

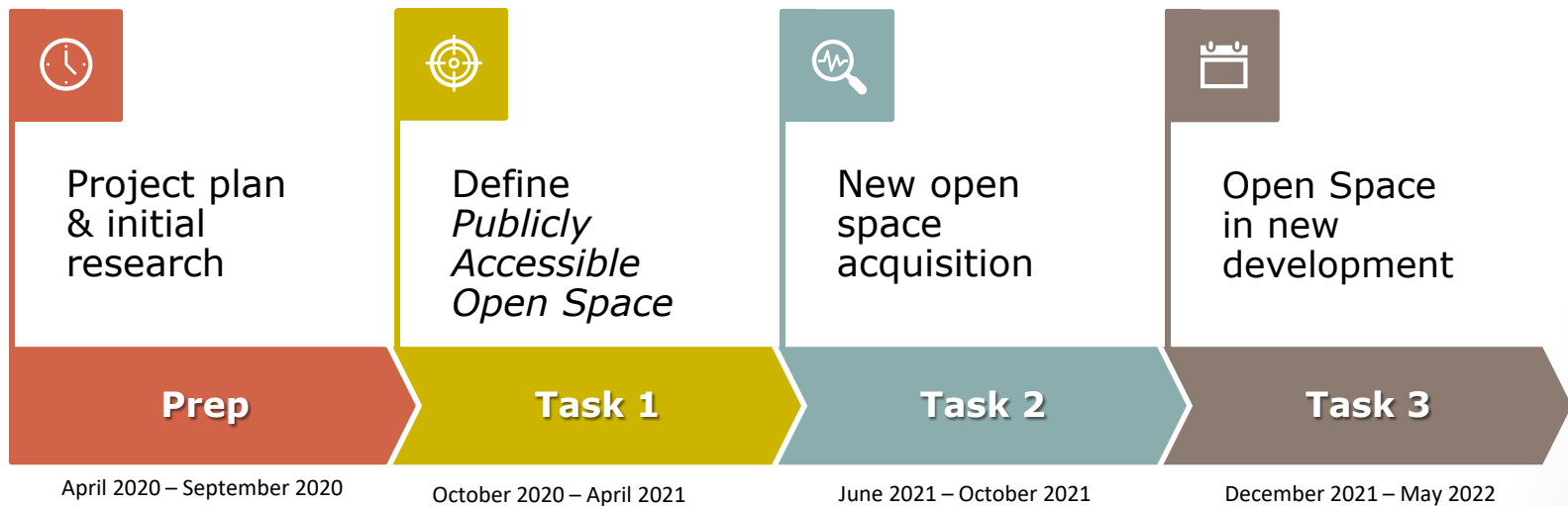
This project aims to implement the *Open Space Master Plan* in support of the City's desire to maintain appropriate acres of protected publicly accessible open space for its residents and improve its environmental quality, management, and social benefits.







# Project Timeline





# Task 1: Update the definition of “Publicly Accessible Open Space”

**Provide a recommendation for updating and clarifying the definition of what types of publicly accessible open space (use, type, function, and extent of public accessibility) “counts” toward the City’s public open space goals.**

*This would provide guidance on easement language (how much and what forms of public access must be provided for it to count) and future policy changes.*



# Publicly Accessible Open Space

# Proposed Definition

Publicly Accessible Open Space in the City of Alexandria is:

Outdoor space where public access is assured within ordinary circumstances with the primary purpose being formal or informal recreation; or the conservation and protection of natural, cultural, or historic resources; and which the enhancement of the health and well-being of Alexandria's residents and visitors.

# Proposed Purpose

The City of Alexandria seeks to preserve, increase, and enhance publicly accessible open space in order to provide citizens and visitors with assured access to open spaces which support a healthy, livable and sustainable city; to enrich and enhance our cultural and historic heritage; to promote opportunities for community gathering and common use and preservation of natural resources in our diverse city.



# Proposed Goals

Urban areas should contain a complement of publicly accessible open space types in order to serve local recreation and leisure needs; support revitalization goals; assist environmental and sustainability goals; and contribute to and enhance our cultural and historical identity. Space constraints in urban environments make it important to pursue creative solutions to providing open space and recreational facilities in these areas.

# Proposed Goals

1. Be a meaningful place for community gathering and social interaction
2. Be multi-functional and adaptable
3. Be continuous and connected, and provide connectivity for pedestrians and recreational users
4. Enhance diversity, inclusivity, equity, and accessibility
5. Enrich understanding of our history and cultural traditions
6. Promote health and well being
7. Foster environmental sustainability
8. Preserve, protect, and/or enhance existing natural areas
9. Preserve and protect outdoor historical and cultural resources
10. Promote habitat benefits for wildlife

# Proposed Guidelines

- **Accessible**
- **Useable**
- **Design**
- **Equitable**



# Public Access Easements





# Public Access Easement Update

## Public Access Easement for **Public-Private Open Space**

- Potential flexibility/options:
  - Rules and regulations mutually decided by both owner and City to determine extent of public availability
  - Private activities limited—restrictions may be based on several factors such as size of space, adjacent uses, duration of activity, and demand/service area
  - Private activities that restrict public use such as charging fees or profiting may be limited or not allowed
  - City may program spaces that are open to the general public per the City Special Events policy



# Public Access Easement Update

- Other easements types include historic, conservation, and scenic easements. If sites allow public access consistent with public access and open space guidance, such easements could count towards City open space acreage goals
- Ingress-Egress easements can provide pedestrian pass-through space to access public open spaces



Stonegate Scenic Easement

# Open Space Typologies



Classification	Description	Size	Service
<b>Citywide</b>	Contains multiple uses within park boundary including: attracts visitors from all over the City Example: Chinguapin Park	15-20 acres	0-25 miles from users
<b>Neighborhood</b>	May include multiple uses within park boundary; attracts nearby residents Example: Beverley Park	20,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres	0-5 miles from users
<b>Pocket Park</b>	Small open space; mainly single use attracting nearby residents  Example: Sunset Mini Park	Under 20,000 sq. ft.	.25-0.5 mile or less from users
<b>Natural Resource Areas</b>	Includes open spaces that are primarily passive-use or preservation areas Example: Clermont Natural Park	No Minimum or Maximum	Citywide



Classification	Description	Size	Service
<b>Shared Use</b>	Includes parks that share facilities with schools and recreation centers  Example: Patrick Henry Field	5-20 acres (average)	0-25 miles from users
<b>Destination/ Historical</b>	Attracts users from beyond the region, typically because of particularly unique features  Example: Fort Ward Park, Waterfront Park System	Varies	0-100 or more miles
<b>Regional</b>	Includes lands or facilities administered by other regional entities  Example: Cameron Run Regional Park	50-75 acres	0-100 miles from users
<b>Corridors/ Linear Parks/ Trailways</b>	Includes trailways, corridors and linear parks that serve primarily as linear bikeway corridors, may include ROWs  Example: Metro Linear Park	No Minimum or Maximum	0-100 miles from users

# New Typologies

- **Resource Protection Areas**

- RPAs are sensitive environmental corridors that should be preserved in a natural condition. The City adopted an RPA map in 1992 based on criteria provided in the Management Regulations. State mandates require that **all City streams with perennial flow must be protected by a 100-foot Resource Protection Area buffer.**
- *Staff comment: RPAs have certain restrictions and benefits that are different than other natural resource areas*

- **Cemeteries**

- *Staff comment: Does not fit neatly with destination/historical*



# POS Zone Text Amendments





# Task 2

- Evaluate and recommend methods of pursuing new publicly accessible open space.
  1. Develop criteria for considering opportunities for open space acquisition through the Open Space Fund (such as connectivity, walkability to neighborhood needs, access to water, etc.).
  2. Develop minimum publicly accessible open space criteria for small area plans based on current and future demographic needs and neighborhood characteristics.
  3. Evaluate the Open Space Ratio and/or other targets based on national standards and benchmarks for localities with similar densities.

**Thank you!**